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Authors Note

[image][image]

This is the first draft of this book so it may have some plot holes or confusing scenes. None of these chapters have gone through heavy editing and I'm just writing down what comes to mind. This book will be taken down after I finish it to go under major editing.

In this story, BloodClan moved to a forest and the numbers are much smaller only about 15-25 cats. They began to act a bit more like a clan but they have no warrior code and still live by the quote, 'Kill or be killed. Romantic love is scorned and the clan leader decides who mates with who.

A new rank has been added to BloodClan. The assassins are 5 cats that rarely speak and are the most elite fighters in the clan. The leader uses them to dispose of any enemies or cats that displease them.

They are usually avoided by other cats and are very secretive. If an assassin dies the remaining assassins discuss who the next assassin will be together with the leader and deputy. Assassins can also rank up to deputy.

If an assassin disobeys the leader or is caught in the act of treason they are immediately killed. If you are chosen to be a new assassin you must complete a mission the leader gives you. This usually includes killing and/or fighting.

Please leave comments as you read! Feedback is very important for me and motivates me. Don't be afraid to point out spelling/ grammar mistakes or plot holes. So comments are greatly

appreciated! And votes too of course (;

Some parts in this story may sound familiar to other warrior fanfics. I promise I did not purposely copy any storylines from other books. I did not copy any names from other books, if your OC has the same name as mine, it's coincidence.

The warrior cats universe belongs to Erin Hunter.

Allegiances

[image]

BloodClan:

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Leader:

Sky: Pretty gray and blue she-cat with blue eyes

Deputy:

Blizzard: White tom with black flecks and yellow eyes

Assassins:

Mask: White tom with black mask pattern on his head

Frost: Pure white small she-cat

Slash: Sleek brown she-cat with 6 claws on her right forepaw

Blade: Brown tabby tom

Raven: Black she-cat with strangely slanted, silver eyes

Warriors:

Venom: Red and black tom

Ivy: Calico she-cat with green eyes

Panther: Massive black tom with many scars

Nightshade: Pure black she-cat with green eyes
Apprentice: Ivory

Heron: Large dark brown tom
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Flame: Ginger tom with amber eyes

Minty: Small dark gray she-cat with pale green eyes
Apprentice: Pixie

Talon: Black tom with hazel eyes

Bristle: Skinny russet she-cat with blue eyes
Apprentice: Rain

Quartz: Gray and black tabby tom

Bolt: Lean silver and white tom

Jade: Silver she-cat with jade green eyes

Smoke: Dusky gray she-cat

Rapids: Dark gray and white spotted tom

Fox: Battle-scarred dark ginger tom

Thorn: Dark brown tabby she-cat with light blue eyes

Apprentices:

Pixie: Small white she-cat with yellow eyes

Rain: Gray tom with deep blue eyes

Ivory: Pale creamy white she-cat

Queens:

Diamond: White and cream she-cat with amber eyes (Nursing Blaze, Shimmer, and Fang)

Aster: Black and the white tabby she-cat (Nursing Shadow and Spark)

Snowy: White she-cat with a shredded ear (Expecting Heron's kits)

Kits:

Shadow: Black and gray shaggy she-cat with stormy blue eyes

Spark: Small white cat with ginger patches and yellow eyes

Blaze: Yellow and gray tom with orange eyes

Shimmer: Ginger and white she-cat

Fang: White tom with gray patches

Prologue

[image] [image]

The cat glanced around, a haunted look in their eyes. They made their way over to a large bramble bush, with one last look behind them, they slipped inside.

The cat padded over to a nest made of moss and bracken, kits were sleeping inside, curled up in little bundles of warm fur. The cat gently picked up a gray tom. The kit mewled in protest, kicking his stubby legs.

The cat quickly muffled the sound with their paw but it was too late, amber eyes snapped open. The two cats stared at each other before the amber eyes blinked once and shut themselves again. The intruder let out a sigh of gratitude and slinked out of the bramble bush with the kits clasped in their jaws.

They made their way out of the camp, keeping close to the shadows. The sky was beginning to brighten when the cat finally reached their destination. The cat set down the kit and began grooming her fur nervously. They waited anxiously by a fence, fidgeting and squirming with impatience.

The kit mewled, the night was cold and he missed his littermate's warm pelts beside him. He pushed his way towards the cat who had carried him through the forest, nestling himself into their warm belly fluff.

The cat pushed him away, swallowing their grief. Suddenly the fence shook and a large shape blocking out the light. The cat looked up as the newcomer leaped down to join them.

"Have you brought him?" The large tom asked in a gruff voice. The cat answered in a shaking voice, "Of course, Caspian. He was the strongest one of the litter, as you requested."

The tom sniffed the kit, then raised his head. "Good, you have

completed my demand. I won't bother you or your friends anymore. " He picked up the kit and prepared to jump onto the fence again.

"Wait!" The cat cried, locking their eyes onto the wailing kit. The tom turned his massive head. "What? Turning back?" His voice became a dangerous growl.

The cat jumped onto the fence and crouched low, their strong muscles rippling under their pelt. Caspian struck out with his paw, his claws flashing in the moonlight before coming down on the cat's head.

They yowled as blood gushed from the wound and fell from the fence, barely landing on all four paws. Caspian snarled, "Any last words to this kit?"

The cat made a strangling sound in their throat, "No, it's just... His name is Fog, I- Never mind, just take him!"

The cat ripped their eyes away from the dangling kit and bounded off into the forest, determined to return to their home before any cat noticed their absence. They ripped through thorns and vines that clung to their paws as they dashed back to their camp, heart breaking into a thousand pieces.

A/N: Who do you think the mysterious cat is? Why does Caspian want the kit? Let me know what you think of the story so far! (Word count: 480)

Chapter 1

Loud noises woke Shadow up. She lifted her head to see Flint and Blaze wrestling, tumbling across the nursery. A cold nose poked at Shadow and she looked down to find Spark snuggled against her.

The gray and black she-cat softened at the sight and almost bent down to give her sister a loving lick before stiffening.

Love is weakness. Affection is feeble.

She reminded herself, forcing herself to remain impassive and cold as Spark mewled in her sleep.

Shadow jumped as a bad-tempered growl sounded from behind her. "Keep it down will you!" Shimmer rose from her nest, shooting a glare at her brothers. The kit began smoothing down her fur with long, brisk licks.

Shimmer let out a squeal of protest when her brother cannoned into her side and knocked her off her feet. She began pummeling Blaze and snapped at Flint's tail as it whisked by.

Shadow's mother, Aster, watched approvingly as the three kits snarled and scuffle amongst themselves. "Kick out with your hind legs Flint!" She called as Blaze broke free from his sister and pinned down his brother.

Shadow scoffed in disgust and began grooming her ruffled fur. At that moment, Diamond came in. "Oh!" She mewed, looking in distress at her fighting kits.

The white queen pulled Blaze out of the fight and attempted to give him a lick on the head. But her son just gave her a sharp nip on the paw and threw himself back into the fray.

Shadow inwardly winced at the sign of affection that had been bestowed upon Blaze. Diamond had always been too weak, trying to

keep the peace between her kits.

It was no wonder Sky had made her a permanent queen. She cared too much for other cats.

Aster narrowed her eyes at her fellow queen but didn't say anything. Instead, she walked over to Shadow and her sister and prodded the sleeping Spark with one paw.

Spark lifted her head and blinked her eyes blearily. "It's time for your exercise." Aster mewed gruffly, shoving her daughters to their feet,

By exercise, Aster meant that Spark and Shadow had to run one lap around the camp and then fight each other.

The two sisters hated it but Aster forced them to do it early in the morning when Sky was out in the clearing.

Shadow gave a big sigh and started trotting along the camp walls, keeping well out of the way of warriors eating prey.

She dipped her head respectfully at Sky, who was sharing a squirrel with Blizzard.

After completing a lap she waited with her mother for the panting Spark to reach them. After a few moments, the two sisters faced each other, forcing their fur to stand up.

They both stared intently at Aster, waiting for the signal to attack. Aster raised her tail and they sprang at each other, claws unsheathed.

They had learned long ago that sheathed claws earned a punishment. Shadow had suffered from Aster's claws once when she had gone too easy on Spark. Snowy came out of the nursery to watch, her stomach bloated with kits.

Shadow aimed a blow at her sister's right shoulder, the one facing away from their mother. Just before her paw landed she sheathed her claws, a tactic that she and her sister had worked out.

Spark pretended to cry out in pain and launched herself at Shadow, dealing her a clumsy blow on the ears.

They sparred for a few more moments until Aster nodded approvingly and padded to the prey pile to get some food for herself.

Shadow led her sister back into the nursery where Diamond had managed to break up the fight. They settled down in their nest to wait, kits were often fed last in BloodClan.

Spark began grooming her sister, Shadow stiffened, unused to the gentle gesture. She pulled away, trying to ignore the hurt in Spark's eyes.

It's for the best. She told herself. *Even if it breaks my heart, it's for the best. Spark will grow to be weak if I show my love for her.*

Diamond poked her head out of the nursery and seeing that the warriors had finished eating, she went to get prey for her kits.

When she came back she gave two mice to her kits and then turned to Shadow and Spark. Diamond nudged a vole toward them, blinking warmly at the two kits.

Shadow was surprised but grateful, it often took Aster a long time to get prey for them. She let Spark take the first few bites before moving forward to eat from the vole herself.

They blocked out the noises of the other kits fighting over the last few scraps and filled their bellies with prey.

The two siblings had started eating prey when they were one and a half moons old. At first, their stomach had protested and they had thrown up most of it but now they could eat prey without a problem.

When they had finished the vole they buried the scraps behind the nursery and settled down for a short nap.

Blaze was boasting about how they would be apprenticed in half a moon. Shimmer scoffed and started meowing that she would surely

be apprenticed to the deputy, she was the best kit after all.

Spark rolled her eyes at them. "Stupid furballs." Shadow snickered as Flint began sneaking up on the unexpecting Shimmer. It wasn't long before the three older kits were yowling at the top of their lungs and fighting.

(Word count: 926)

[image]

Chapter 2

[image]

One moon later

Shadow watched with wide eyes as Sky leaped upon the Big Stone with a massive leap. The BloodClan leader threw back her head and let out a loud yowl. "Let every cat old enough to shed blood gather beneath the Big Stone!"

Cats began milling around the Big Stone, looking up expectantly. Shadow felt her sister's fur bristle with excitement beside her.

She wished she could share her sister's enthusiasm for becoming an apprentice but all she felt was a dreading feeling in her stomach. Shadow looked back at the nursery, where she had slept every single night for the past four moons.

Diamond caught her stare and blinked encouragingly, nodding for her to walk forward. Shadow took a deep breath and padded forward, beckoning Spark with her tail.

Sky looked down at them, cold blue eyes boring into Shadows.

"Shadow, you have reached the age of four moons and it is time for you to be apprenticed. Your soft days of kit-hood are over, I expect your mentor will train you hard. Ivy, you are an excellent warrior, teach Shadow all she needs to know about becoming a BloodClan warrior."

A calico she-cat with bright, green eyes padded towards them. Shadow forced herself not to shrink back as Ivy touched noses with her.

"I expect only the best from you, do not fail me." The low growl startled Shadow but she nodded fervently.

Sky repeated the same ceremony with Spark and apprenticed her to

Talon, a large, dark brown tom. Spark was almost bouncing with excitement and Talon gave her a sharp cuff on the ears when she started asking him multiple questions.

Ivy turned towards Shadow. "Go eat something and then meet me at the camp entrance." She walked away before Shadow could say anything, leaving her with no choice but to follow her orders.

Shadow padded to the prey pile and chose a small mouse, she glanced around for Spark but her sister was nowhere to be seen.

"You're lucky you got Ivy as your mentor." A voice spoke from beside her, Shadow looked up to find Blaze sitting a tail-length away. "Why?" She asked, eager to know more about her mentor.

Blaze flicked his tail lazily, "Everyone says she's one of the best fighters in BloodClan. She can be a bit harsh sometimes too, you don't want to get on the wrong side of her. " Shadow shrugged and went back to her mouse, not wanting to anger her mentor by being late.

Shadow buried the mouse scraps quickly and went over to the camp entrance, where Ivy was waiting. "Follow me." The mysterious she-cat said and padded away without checking if her apprentice was following.

Shadow bounded after her mentor, "What are we going to do?" She asked, panting. Ivy didn't say anything, she just kept striding through the forest with long, big steps.

They walked through the forest, Shadow too breathless to ask any more questions. She did take a moment to look around, amazed at this new world before her.

Shadow was focussing on not stumbling on any roots or leaves when she suddenly noticed that her mentor had disappeared. "Ivy?" She called in a shaking voice, unsure of what to do.

The forest suddenly seemed a lot more ominous than before, Shadow backed up slowly, stumbling over rocks and roots. A fern caught her around the paw and she screeched, certain that it was an

enemy.

The apprentice ripped herself free and raced away blindly, leaves and branches flashing around her.

Suddenly a heavy weight slammed into her, pinning her to the soft forest floor. Shadow thrashed and fought the cat on top of her until she realized it was Ivy, staring down at her with those guarded, green eyes.

"Wha-? Why did you disappear? I-" Shadow spluttered as her mentor let her back up. Ivy narrowed her eyes as if scrutinizing the young cat before her. "I was testing your reflexes and survival skills." The warrior whisked her tail, stirring up leaves and twigs.

"It took you a few moments to realize I was gone, an enemy cat could have easily pinned you down in that time. You panicked, running towards camp. A mistake, you could have led the enemy towards our camp, where unexpected kits, queens, and apprentices with little or no battle experience would have to face vicious rouges. "

Shadow bowed her head in shame, seeing the wisdom in her mentor's words. "I'll do better next time." She promised, determination flowing through her.

Ivy looked amused and mildly curious. "Of course you will, you have realized your mistake. I will not take failure as a result." Her words chilled Shadow to the bone, maybe her mentor was a colder cat than she had expected, which made her all the better addition to BloodClan, she realized.

"We'll go back to camp and rest, tomorrow we will practice fighting moves and maybe explore more of BloodClan's territory." Her mentor instructed, leading the way back home.

Shadow suddenly longed for her nest in the nursery, which she shared with Spark. The short walk and adrenaline had drained all her energy and she felt like she could sleep for a moon.

What do you think of the characters so far?

Who's your favorite?
Who's your least favorite?
Who's the most interesting?
(Word Count: 897)

Chapter 3

[image]

Shadow sighed as yet another screech rang through the air. Snowy had begun kitting at sun high and she was now well into the night. She could hear Diamond murmuring encouragingly to her, urging her to push on.

There was silence for a few heartbeats before tiny mews broke the quiet, tense, air. A few cats in the clearing gave sighs of relief and padded to their nests, eager to catch some sleep.

Spark and Shadow did the same, collapsing into their nests. Their first day of being apprentices had worn them out and they knew tomorrow wouldn't be any easier.

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The two siblings woke up to water dripping down on them. Being the newest apprentices, they were given the worst nests. The roof above them had a few small holes in it and water was trickling through.

Spark sighed and stood up, shaking her pelt to remove the water droplets that clung to her fur. One glance outside was enough to confirm that a steady drizzle was pouring down.

Shadow stood up and shook her fur out too, accidentally spraying water on Ivory. The she-cat snapped her head up and glared at Shadow, muttering angrily under her breath.

The two sisters padded out of the apprentice den. Pixie and Rain were already out in the clearing, huddled together for warmth.

Sky padded out of her den, the rain didn't seem to bother her, she walked right into the icy cold without flinching.

She leaped onto the Big Stone and called a clan meeting. Cats
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grumbled and protested as they went into the cold mist, but were silenced with one cold glare from Sky.

"Cats of BloodClan," She began, once every cat was present. "Yesterday, Snowy gave birth to one kit. She named him Sliver. A queen must give birth to new warriors into BloodClan. Even though Snowy was paired with a strong cat she only brought us one kit."

Cats began murmuring amongst themselves, one kit litter rarely happened, Sky always paired cats that would result in the bigger litter.

Sky silenced her clan with a lash of the tail and continued. "Snowy had disappointed me and the clan. And now I ask you, as members of BloodClan, what should happen to Snowy and her kit?"

Whispers and murmurs broke out again until a red and black tom stepped forward. "Her kit should live, he has done nothing wrong. Snowy should be made a permanent queen, she should dedicate her life to bringing BloodClan new kits, as she has failed and disappointed us now."

Sky nodded approvingly at the tom. "Thank you Venom, your judgment is wise, from now on Snowy will be a permanent queen, her kit shall not be held responsible for her actions."

Snowy bowed her head in shame from where she sat in the nursery entrance and several cats shot glares at her.

Sky called the meeting to an end and went back inside her den.

Blizzard started organizing patrols, splitting cats into hunting patrols and border checks.

"Ivy, Shadow, and Jade go to the prisoner's den. I want you on guard until sunhigh." Shadow snapped to attention when Blizzard called her name. Ivy and a silver she-cat walked towards her.

"What is the prisoner's den?" She asked her mentor, unfamiliar with the term.

"I'll explain when we get there," Ivy grunted, leading the way.

Shadow's mentor led the way through the forest, snapping through thin branches and barging her way through brambles like it was nothing. Jade followed with the same ease, her feet naturally avoiding roots and thorns as she walked.

Shadow focused on her feet and nearly ran into Jade when Ivy stopped in front of a hole in the ground. Two big warriors were guarding the hole, looking relieved that the three cats had arrived.

"Finally," A dark brown tom muttered, stretching his legs and back. "I thought you'd never come!"

Ivy scoffed and brushed past him, taking place before the dark hole, and then motioned for her apprentice and fellow warrior to do the same.

The two former guards padded off, talking softly to each other. Shadow's mentor faced her, "This is the prisoners' den, this is where BloodClan keeps any cat that displeases Sky. The prisoners can be rogues, kittypets, clan cats, or even BloodClan cats that have broken the rules."

Jade shifted uncomfortably as cries of hunger rang from the dark, stinky hole. Shadow narrowed her eyes at her mentor, a question rising. "Clan cats? Who are they? Are they like BloodClan cats?"

Immediately, Jade stiffened and Shadow felt like she had said the wrong thing at the wrong time. "That's a lesson for another day." Ivy meowed, avoiding eye contact. "The lesson today was to show you the prisoners' den. Take a look inside."

Shadow bent her head reluctantly and crawled to the entrance of the hole, inside, the hole expanded into a large cavern. Bramble bushes and thorns blocked the entrance so that the prisoners couldn't escape.

Shadow caught a glimpse of reeking, wounded, cats that were milling around inside, their ribs protruding from their pelt. She nearly gagged as she saw a cat with a missing eye, the flesh around the wound infected and rotting.

She stood back up again, feeling light-headed. “Why does Sky keep them here? Why not just kill them or chase them off?” Ivy laughed mirthlessly, shaking her head as she would at a silly kit. The apprentice ducked her head embarrassed, “I just meant-”

“No,” Ivy cut her off, “It's a good question. You see, sometimes cats need to prove themselves. To become a deputy, assassin, or warrior. That's when the prisoners come in handy, we feed them once a day so that they give a bit of a fight when we use them.”

Shadow felt sick to the stomach, then steeled herself.

You'll never become a warrior if you're weak!

She scolded herself, nodding at her mentor's words. Jade stood up, looking towards the forest. “I'll hunt for the prisoners.” She told Ivy, who nodded curtly in response.

Shadow watched as the graceful silver she-cat bounded into the forest. She blocked out the sounds of the prisoner's moans and instead focused on what her mentor had taught her.

She was jerked out of her thoughts when Jade returned, carrying a squirrel, a thrush, and a couple of mice. “That'll never be enough for them!” She gasped, remembering the many starving cats she'd seen.

Ivy scratched her sharply across the nose. “All they do is sit on their tail all day, they didn't do anything to deserve that prey! Perhaps you would like to join them?”

Shadow shook her head, shaking in horror at the thought of joining the suffering cats.

Jade shoved the prey through a small gap in the brambles and the prisoners fell upon the food like starving badgers, fighting each other viciously for the smallest scraps.

Ivy watched them with an amused expression like the fighting was just as harmless as two kits scuffling.

A/**N: What are your thoughts on the characters and story so far? Drop a vote if you enjoyed this chapter! Love you all! <3**

(Word count: 1200 words)

Chapter 4

[image]

Shadow wrinkled her nose at the dirty bedding. She had been cleaning out nests since dawn. It was a punishment for losing a fight to Shimmer. Ivy had been harsh on her, even though the older apprentice had had more training.

She hauled the dirty moss and ferns outside the camp and buried them, ignoring Shimmer's snickers from where the she-cat lay on a sunlit spot.

Shadow spotted Ivy heading towards her and she brightened, hoping that she would be relieved from her duties.

The calico scanned Shadow's work and nodded. "Finish up here and meet me at the training hollow for battle training, you need it." Shadow flinched at her mentor's words and scolded herself for even thinking that Ivy would feel sympathy.

She cleaned the rest of the nests and arrived at the training hollow with tired muscles. Ivy hardly spared her a glance before drawing two lines into the dirt with her claw, spaced apart.

She then faced her apprentice. "You will take a running leap, don't cross the first line and land after the second line. When you were fighting Shimmer your leaps were short and powerless."

Shadow nodded, remembering the bruises she had received from crashing to the ground after a failed attacking leap.

She backed up a few fox-lengths and narrowed her eyes at the first line, determined not to cross it. The black and gray apprentice launched herself forward, aware of Ivy's deep green eyes boring into her.

She leaped a few paw spaces before the line, reaching forward with her front paws. Lashing her tail furiously, Shadow managed to stay

upright in the air. She landed on all four paws and started to stand up proudly before freezing when she spotted the second line a good tail-length away.

Ivy stalked over, her fur bristling angrily. "What was that? I've seen kits do better! Use your hind legs, dig your claws into the ground as you run, it gives you more momentum."

Shadow padded to the front line and tried again, digging her claws into the ground and putting more strength into her hind legs. She watched the ground flash beneath her as she soared through the sky.

The apprentice landed hard and stumbled, then looked back to see the second line behind her. Pride filled her heart until a heavy paw cuffed her on the head. Ivy shook her head, "You started your leap after the first line, try again."

Shadow growled in frustration but padded back to the first line. After many failed attempts and bad-tempered growls and corrections from Ivy, she finally managed to clear the jump by crossing the lines.

She lay down in the shade of a bush, panting hard. But Ivy shoved her back to her paws and ran her through multiple complicated battle moves, driving her until she collapsed in fatigue.

Black dots danced in front of Shadow's eyes, the blurry shape of her mentor approaching. Ivy snorted in disgust and padded back to camp, leaving her apprentice to recover by herself.

After several heartbeats, Shadow could see again. She dragged herself to a stream close by and drank as much as she could, water dripping down her chin and wetting her chest fur.

The apprentice began inspecting the bruises and scratches covering her body from the brutal training. Clearing out the nest wasn't Ivy's punishment for losing to Shimmer. This was, she realized, shivering as a cold rain began pattering down on her already damp fur.

She quickly went back to camp, sickness was a dangerous thing in

BloodClan, few cats had herb knowledge. Shadow plopped herself beside her sister and started licking her wet fur. Spark gasped when she saw her littermate's condition and helped her untangle her matted fur.

After Spark had heard the story her eyes turned dark and stormy. "I hate being an apprentice!" She hissed. "All everyone does is hurt each other and hate. What kind of twisted world is that?" Shadow stuffed her tail in Spark's mouth before she could say more.

"If someone hears you we'll both be dead in a heartbeat!" She whispered fiercely, shocked at her sister's treacherous words. Such an act of betrayal could get a cat wishing for a short and quick death. Sky showed no mercy to rebels.

Spark shut her mouth but still lashed her tail angrily. She picked up her prey and stalked over to Diamond on the other side of the camp clearing. Shadow rolled her eyes and went to get prey from the prey pile.

Before she could lower her head to pick up a squirrel a heavy shove knocked her aside. She whipped her head up to see Frost looking at her.

"Have you provided for the clan today?" The assassin asked, her tone silky yet dangerous. "N-no, I was busy training and I had to-"

Frost silenced the stammering apprentice with a sharp hiss and turned her back, forcing Shadow to walk away with an empty stomach.

She curled up in her nest, angry, miserable, and hungry.

What do you think about Spark's words? Do you think Shadow agrees with her? Let me know your thoughts! Don't forget to vote and comment <3

(Word count: 874)

Chapter 5

[image]

Sun rays filtered through the holes in the roof, casting warm beams upon the sleeping cats below.

Shadow lifted her head groggily, welcoming the warm sun after so many rainy days. She hauled herself from her nest and stretched her stiff muscles, still sore from yesterday's battle training. Spark shifted in the nest beside her and murmured in her sleep.

Shadow stepped through the den entrance and found herself in a deserted camp. She looked up to the sky and realized that the sun had barely risen yet, just peeking into the dens. No cat was awake yet, the dawn patrol had probably already left and she was all alone.

Remembering Frost's words from yesterday she decided to go hunting, maybe a full fresh-kill pile would please Ivy. The apprentice bounded out of the camp and into the forest.

Dew still clung to the leaves and it felt like the forest had just woken up, birds began singing their songs and squirrels crawled out of their dens high in the trees. The rustling of leaves signaled that the mice too were waking up.

Shadow realized how lucky she was, after all these rainy days the prey finally had a chance to come out of their dens and forage for worms and nuts.

She focused on a lump of moving leaves, a small rodent was scuffling around under the large leaves. Shadow sunk into the hunter's crouch that Ivy had shown her and crawled forward slowly.

She wiggled her haunches and leaped forward, her claws outstretched and unsheathed. The mouse squealed before Shadow finished it off with a quick bite to the neck.

She licked her lips, ignoring the sharp pangs of hunger in her stomach. After burying the small mouse she continued her way through the forest, determined not to come back until she was satisfied with the amount of prey she had caught.

Shadow decided to head towards the two-leg place. The scents from previous hunting patrols that led there were stale, telling her that nobody had hunted there in a while.

As she stalked through the forest silently her thoughts turned back to her conversation with Spark. She wondered if her sister had told her thoughts to anyone else besides her, she hoped not.

Trust was not something you could have in BloodClan; someone you thought was your friend could turn you in to Sky in a heartbeat.

If any cat had heard Spark's treacherous words then the two sisters were both in grave danger.

Shadow had seen Sky deal with traitors once before. She shuddered at the memories of the cat's agonized screams as they begged for mercy.

A loud crackling came from the bushes next to her. She whipped her head up and perked her ears to where the sound was coming from.

Shadow realized she was close to BloodClan's border, the two-leg place was not far off. A huge black cat pushed his way through the bushes, a sparrow clasped in his jaws.

She hissed fiercely, trying not to let her fear show. The black tom blinked in surprise, clearly not expecting to run into anyone.

"Get off of BloodClan territory!" Shadow spat, bushing her fur out. The massive cat smirked, infuriating her further.

Suddenly a young tom around her age burst through the bushes.

"Is everything alright Caspian? Who is she?"
The smoky gray tom questioned, narrowing his murky gray-green

eyes.

"Everything's fine," Caspian snapped. "Just a foolish brat bothering me, collect your prey and go back to the dumpster Fog."

Shadow wrinkled her nose at the unfamiliar word. Before she could utter another mew the two strange cats had left her standing there in confusion and anger.

She huffed and decided to keep hunting, she would report this to Ivy later.

After catching a squirrel, a mouse, and 2 voles she headed back to camp.

Halfway there her jaws started aching from the huge amount of prey. The apprentice put down her prey and decided to carry the squirrel under her chin like a bundle of moss. She looked ridiculous but no one was around to see anyways.

After walking a few tree lengths a loud snicker sounded from beside her. She whipped her head around to see Blaze staring at her, amusement dancing in his bright, orange eyes.

"What are you laughing at dung-face!"
Shadow spat, her stormy blue eyes blazing.

Blaze's eyes landed on the squirrel tucked under Shadow's chin. "Interesting, err, technique."

She quickly dropped the piece of prey and glared at him. "I don't suppose you know a better way?"

The tom padded forward slowly. "No, but I can help you."

He dipped his head to pick up the squirrel, brushing her cheek lightly in the problem. Shadow drew back sharply, then picked up the rest of her prey.

They walked back to camp in awkward silence, avoiding any eye contact.

When they pushed their way through the camp entrance Shadow deposited her catch at the fresh-kill pile, earning an approving nod from her mentor.

She turned to thank Blaze for helping her carry the prey only to find that the apprentice had already left.

What do you think about Blaze so far? How do you think the characters in the prologue connect to the characters in this chapter? Keep an eye out for Fog and Caspian, they'll be important later on (:
Don't forget to vote and comment, you guys inspire and motivate me so much <33

(Word count: 917)

Updated Allegiances

[image]

Updated allegiances!

Leader:

Sky: Pretty gray and blue she-cat with blue eyes

Deputy:

Blizzard: White tom with black flecks and yellow eyes

Assassins:

Mask: White tom with black mask pattern on his head

Frost: Pure white small she-cat

Slash: Sleek brown she-cat with 6 claws on her right forepaw

Blade: Brown tabby tom

Raven: Black she-cat with strangely slanted, silver eyes

Warriors:

Venom: Red and black tom

Ivy: Calico she-cat with green eyes
Apprentice: Shadow

Panther: Dark brown tabby tom with many scars

Nightshade: Pure black she-cat with green eyes
Apprentice: Ivory

Heron: Large dark brown tom

Flame: Ginger tom with amber eyes

Minty: Small dark gray she-cat with pale green eyes
Apprentice: Pixie

Talon: Black tom with hazel eyes
Apprentice: Spark

Bristle: Skinny russet she-cat with blue eyes
Apprentice: Rain

Bolt: Lean silver and white tom

Quartz: Gray and black tabby tom
Apprentice: Blaze

Jade: Silver she-cat with jade green eyes

Smoke: Dusky gray she-cat
Apprentice: Shimmer

Rapids: Dark gray and white spotted tom

Fox: Battle-scarred dark ginger tom
Apprentice: Fang

Thorn: Dark brown tabby she-cat with light blue eyes

Aster: Black and the white tabby she-cat

Apprentices:

Pixie: Small white she-cat with yellow eyes

Rain: Gray tom with deep blue eyes

Ivory: Pale creamy white she-cat

Shadow: Black and gray shaggy she-cat with stormy blue eyes

Spark: Small white cat with ginger patches and yellow eyes

Blaze: Yellow and gray tom with orange eyes

Shimmer: Ginger and white she-cat

Fang: White tom with gray patches

Queens:

Diamond: White and cream she-cat with amber eyes

Snowy: White she-cat with a shredded ear (Nursing Heron's kit Sliver)

Kits:

Sliver: White tom with gray stripes

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Cats outside BloodClan:

Caspian: Massive black tom

Fog: Gray tom with murky green eyes.
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Chapter 6

[image]

Shadow looked around to see Blaze sitting here with his brother Flint. He didn't even glance her way, it was as if their encounter had never happened.

"Well done Shadow, the clan will eat well tonight."

The black and gray apprentice turned to see Minty, a senior warrior, looking over her catch.

"T-Thank you." Shadow stammered, not used to praise. She gave a small purr of pride and padded off to look for Spark.

She found her sister sitting next to the apprentice den. Spark gave an absent mew of welcome, shifting over to make space for her sister.

"Guess what happened today? I went hunting and caught a huge amount of prey! I also met some weird cats that were on BloodClan territory but I chased them off. When I got back to camp Minty complimented me! She's a senior warrior! Spark? Spark, are you even listening to me?"

Shadow heaved an annoyed sigh as Spark nodded her head distractedly. After another few failed attempts at conversation, Shadow left, feeling a bit hurt that Spark wasn't paying any attention to her.

She padded over to where Rain was sharing prey with Pixie. The two older apprentices greeted her with meows of welcome.

"Come join us!" Pixie called, becoming Shadow with her tail. They scooted over to make space for her and gave her a small mouse.

"How did hunting go this morning?" Rain asked in a quiet voice, the gray tom was usually reserved and calm, never involving himself

with any drama. His sister Pixie was the exact opposite, she was energetic and loved to argue with everyone.

"It was great! The good weather has finally lured the prey out of their dens. I ran into some strange cats by the two-leg border, they left pretty fast though." She meowed, glad to have someone to talk to.

Rain furrowed his forehead.
"You should probably report that to your mentor or a senior warrior. They may be part of a bigger group, BloodClan doesn't tolerate neighbors." Shadow was surprised by his words but nodded.

After finishing her mouse she decided to follow Rain's advice and report the two intruding cats to her mentor.

Ivy was talking to Blizzard, the clan deputy, next to the Big Stone. Shadow waited respectfully a few tail-lengths away until her mentor had finished her conversation.

Ivy turned to her apprentice after Blizzard padded away, looking at her expectantly.
"When I went hunting this morning I ran into two strange cats by the two-leg border. One of them had prey but they disappeared before I could take it back."

The calico she-cat narrowed her green eyes broodingly. "What did they look like?"
Shadow wrinkled her nose, trying to recall the memory.

"The biggest one was black with yellow eyes, he was huge too. The smaller one was about my age, he was gray with murky gray-green eyes. He called the big black tom 'Caspian' and Caspian called him 'Fog'. Caspian told Fog to go back to a 'Dumpster' to wait for him. What a dumpster Ivy?"

"Some kind of two-leg object," Ivy muttered distractedly, deep in thought. She swished her tail in an agitated manner. "I must report this to Sky, go rest and meet me at the training hollow at sunrise. We'll be training with some of the other apprentices today."

Shadow dipped her head in goodbye and went to lay down in a patch of sunlight, grooming her fur.

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"Today we'll be working on battle moves," Nightshade spoke, pacing back and forth before the row of apprentices. The pitch-black she-cat was just as reserved and quietly as her apprentices Ivory. Being the oldest warrior out of all of the mentors, she took the lead in this training session.

"First you'll be paired up with one other apprentice. Your mentors will instruct you on which moves to practice. After the one-on-one training, you'll form two teams and battle against each other." Nightshade's glowing green eyes swept over the apprentices before her, causing their spines to tingle and their fur to bush up slightly.

The black she-cat started pairing up apprentices, Shadow was paired with Pixie.
The small white she-cat snarled at her playfully, "You're going down!" Shadow let her fur stand up,
"We'll see."

Minty and Ivy made their way over to the two apprentices. Ivy spoke first, "You'll be practicing the Half-Turn Belly Rake move today. Shadow pay close attention, this is an advanced move."

Shadow pricked her ears up, eager to impress her mentor. She hoped she would have an advantage in size over Pixie. Although the white she-cat had had a lot more training, she was small for her age, giving Shadow a slight advantage.

"The Half-Turn Belly Rake is done by turning onto your side, slipping under the opponent's belly, raking it with your claws, then swiftly turning back onto all fours out from under your opponent." Ivy meowed.
"I'll demonstrate on Minty."

Ivy took a few paw-steps back and bolted at Minty. Just before crashing into her, the calico slid onto her side under Minty's stomach, raking her paws over the soft underside before rolling
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over and landing on all four paws.

Shadow realized with dread that size was not to her advantage in this move, she'd have to rely on the basic fighting skills she already knew.

"Pixie will go first, start when my tail drops," Minty instructed, raising her fluffy tail high in the air.

Pixie nodded and backed up a few paw-steps, concentrating on her mentor's tail. When it dropped, swishing through the air, she exploder forward. Before Shadow could leap out of the way Pixie had already slipped under her, her paws raking at her soft underbelly violently.

The apprentice gasped as all the air left her, pushed out by Pixie's fierce blows. The small white apprentice rolled out from under her, landing on all four paws perfectly.

"Well done Pixie!" Her mentor praised, giving her a blink of approval.

Pixie puffed her chest proudly, giving Shadow a lopsided smirk.

"It's your turn now Shadow, try to copy what Pixie did." Ivy meowed, giving her a guarded glance.

Shadow nodded and took a deep breath, preparing herself. She narrowed her eyes at Pixie and propelled herself forward with long strides. She slid onto her side and extended her paws to rake then over Pixie's belly only to find the white apprentice standing a tail-length away.

Realizing she had been too slow and Pixie had leaped away Shadow hoisted herself to her feet, embarrassed at her failure.

A heavy paw clouted her across the head, filling her vision with black dots.
"What was that? I've seen hedgehogs move faster than that!" Her mentor fumed.

"Sorry" Shadow muttered, shaking the dust from her pelt. Ivy just

scoffed and turned away.

Suddenly Nightshade's voice rang across the training hollow, "Everyone gather in front of me, you'll be fighting against each other now."

The eight apprentices scrambled to form a line in from of the black she-cat. Nightshade started forming teams, putting Shadow with Flint, Shimmer, and Rain.

Quartz, Blaze's mentor, started explaining the rules of the training battle.

"Each team will have a big leaf to guard, you must work together to defend your leaf and steal the other team's leaf. Claws must be unsheathed, this isn't a kit fight. The winning team gets first pick in prey tonight, the losing team will have apprentice duties for 3 sun-ups. You may start when I give the signal."

The young cats started to murmur amongst themselves excitedly.

Rain, being the oldest apprentice on the team, took charge. "Flint and Shadow, you two guard the leaf. I and Shimmer will try to steal the other team's leaf."

Shimmer smirked, "Are you sure you can trust Shadow with such a position? She seemed to be having trouble defeating a cat smaller than her when we were training." She taunted.

Rain scratched her across the nose with his claws, "Shut up, I saw Flint pin you down at least two times earlier."

Flint snickered at Shimmer's furious expression. He gestured for Shadow to follow him to one of the oak trees bordering the training hollow, where a big red leaf lay.

"You stand right in front of the leaf, I'll try to stop any cats from reaching you. If any cat does manage to reach you, just hold them off and protect the leaf until I come to help alright?" Shadow nodded at Flint's plan, putting herself in front of the red leaf.

A yowl ripped through the air and the training hollow exploded in

action. Both teams surged forward, intent on capturing the other team's leaf.

Blaze and Ivory sped towards Flint, eyes wide with exhilaration. They clashed together in midair, claws scratching and fangs biting wherever they could.

Suddenly Ivory pinned Flint down and Blaze sprinter over to where Shadow stood. She braced herself, narrowing her eyes anxiously.

Blaze sprung at her, paws stretched out before him. Shadow was driven onto the ground by the impact, she was in her back, with Blaze on top of her.

She gasped when she saw his face a whisker away from her's, eyes like the sun dancing with amusement.

"Well hello beautiful."

Cliffhanger!! I hope you don't hate me now ((: At least it was longer than the last couple of chapters
This was mostly a filler chapter but I decided to introduce a lot of new characters. What do you think of that characters do far? Please vote and leave a comment, you guys make my day!!

(Word count: 1605)

Chapter 7

[image]

[TW: Mild gore]

Shadow couldn't move a muscle, all she could do was stare into those beautiful orange orbs. Then she got to her senses and started to fight back.
"Get off me you fox-heart!"

Blaze smirked and leapt off of her, "As you wish."

He then grabbed the leaf and started sprinting full speed back to his own team's side.

Shadow let out a yowl of anger and sped after him, furious at herself for letting him steal the leaf. She had almost caught up with him when a heavy weight crashed into her.

Ivory swung an unsheathed paw at her, hissing. Shadow tried to duck, but was a heartbeat too slow. Claws grazed her cheek, splattering blood on the ground.

The younger apprentice flinched but retaliated, sinking her fangs into Ivory's paw. The pale apprentice let out an enraged yowl, ripping her paw from Shadow's maw.

Ivory hissed in pain as she tried to set her injured paw on the ground, then turned to Shadow, eyes filled with rage.

Shadow braced herself for an attack, but it never came. Nightmare's loud yowl came from the edge of the clearing, signaling the end of the fight.

Victorious cries came from the Blaze's side, he'd brought the leaf to his team's tree successfully.

Shadow huffed in anger and stomped off, mad at herself for letting that obnoxious mouse-brain win.

She started licking at her wounds, an infection could prove deadly in BloodClan.

[Time Skip - Half a moon later]

Sky leaped onto the Big Stone, throwing back her head and calling the clan together.

"Today is an important part for BloodClan. Today three apprentices will prove to us that they're ready to become full members of BloodClan. Rain, Ivory, and Pixie, step forward."

The three apprentices moved forward. Rain had a serious, determined expression on his face. Pixie was quivering with excitement, breathing heavily. Ivory tried to look nonchalant but her muscles were tense and ready for action.

"Bring forward the prisoners!" Sky snarled, an eager glint shining in her cold, blue eyes.

Mask and Raven, two assassins, led 3 beat-up cats in front of the Big Stone. Every cat shuffled back as they passed, assassins made everyone nervous.

Shadow felt Spark shudder beside her as they took in the state of the prisoners.

The first one was a gray and white she-cat with a crazed look in her eyes. The second was a big brown tom that kept his head low. The third was a small ginger tom that looked petrified.

Sky strode up to the three scraggly cats and swiped a tuft of fur from each of them. She then padded to the entrance of the camp and set them down.

"Go to the opposite side of the camp clearing, on my signal, you may run to one of the fur piles. Whichever one you pick is the cat you will fight."

Shadow saw Rain's face fall, though he quickly hid it. He was built with broad shoulders and a muscular build, unlike his two sisters, who were slim with long legs. They would have an advantage in

this race.

Cats parted to the side as the three apprentices padded to the opposite side of camp. Sky let out the starting signal and the young cats exploded forward.

Ivory and Pixie immediately took the lead, sprinting towards the entrance at a neck-breaking pace. Ivory finished a heartbeat before Pixie, snatching the tuft of ginger fur.

Shadow scoffed, of course, she would choose the weakest opponent.

Pixie picked up the gray and white bundle, leaving Rain with the brown tuft of fur.

"Very well," Sky mused, "Ivory, you will go first. Face your opponent, when my tail drops you may attack him. Remember, this is a fight to the death, any sign of mercy is unacceptable."

Ivory nodded tersely, crouching into a fighting stance. Sky's tail swished down, starting the fight.

The pale apprentice started circling the small ginger tom slowly, eying him as if he were a piece of prey. The prisoner whimpered slightly, trembling in terror.

Suddenly, Ivory lunges at the tom, sinking her sharp fangs into his throat. Blood sprayed the clearing as the ginger cat wailed in agony.

Ivory didn't release her lethal grip until the tom stopped moving, his eyes glazing over.

The BloodClan Cats cheered, a bit disappointed by the short fight but impressed by the quick victory.

Sky gave Ivory a nod of approval and directed her icy blue eyes to Pixie.

"Pixie, you're next, face your opponent."

Pixie was bristling with excitement, her eyes wide. She didn't circle her opponent like Ivory, instead, she immediately ran towards the

crazed she-cat.

The apprentice landed several blows to the she-cat's side before darting back.

The prisoner growled, launching herself at Pixie. She managed to scratch Pixie's nose before being pinned down.

The small white apprentice raked her hind legs over the prisoner's belly, sending blood-soaked tufts of fur everywhere.

The gray and white she-cat managed to wiggle her way out from under Pixie, letting out a maniacal laugh.

The fight continued for a while longer, until Pixie slashed her claws over the prisoner's throat. The she-cat collapsed, a bundle of blood-soaked fur and bones.

Pixie puffed her chest triumphantly, raising her chin higher. The BloodClan Cats cheered again, pleased with the fight.

Sky gave another approving nod and called forward Rain. As the gray tom prepared to fight, the prisoner suddenly spoke.

"Wait." Everyone's head snapped to the big brown tom. "I won't fight you. I don't believe in violence, my life's job before I was brought here was to heal cats. I will not fight you."

Rain blinked in surprise, "Don't expect mercy, I'll kill you if you'll fight me or not."

"Do you really want to kill an innocent cat in cold blood?" The prisoner questioned, only then raising his head. Every-cat in the clearing gasped, the tom's eyes were silver.

Silver was an extremely rare eye colour for cats, most cats had only heard about it in nursery stories. It was a sign of bad luck in BloodClan, silver eyed cats were believed to be possessed.

The brown tom calmly walked towards the entrance, casting one last glance over the awestruck cats. Some warriors averted their eyes or backed away, scared to be cursed.

After the tom left the whole camp was quiet. You could hear a leaf fall, no one dared move a whisker.

Even the usually noisy Sliver didn't make a sound.

"Don't just stand there mouse-brains! Go after him!" Sky finally screeched, breaking the deafening silence.

This chapter was kinda chaotic! I realized in the allegiances it says that Raven has silver eyes so I fixed that lol. What do you think of the mysterious silver eyed cat? Let me know your thoughts and don't forget to vote! <3
(Word count: 1156)

Chapter 8

[image]
[image]

"What?!" Sky thundered.

Mask flinched, backing up a few pawsteps.

"There was no trace of him anywhere, it's as if he disappeared into thin air!" Mask defended, glancing to his fellow assassins for support.

"So now you're just making excuses to save your miserable hide!" The BloodClan leader sneered, raking her claws across Mask's face.

He didn't move a whisker, just bowing his head in acceptance. Blood dripped from his face onto the ground, mingling with the dust to create a sticky, maroon puddle.

Sky turned her back to the assassins, hauling herself into the Big Stone.

"Every cat old enough to shed blood gather by the Big Stone!" Most cats were already in the clearing, a few cats came out of their dens and gathered by the Big Stone.

Shadow had been resting in the shadow of a leafy bush, she padded over to where Spark was standing by the Big Stone.

"Every patrol leaving the camp must keep an eye out for this cursed cat, no one escapes BloodClan alive!" The warriors surrounding the Big Stone yowled in agreement, before breaking off into small groups to gossip about the strange tom.

"Who do you think that tom was?" Spark questioned, furrowing her nose in thought as she turned to her sister.

"I'm not sure, I've never seen a cat like that," Shadow responded, remembering the tom's piercing silver eyes sweeping over the

BloodClan cats.

"Maybe he was a-" Spark glanced around to make sure no one was listening and continued in a hushed tone, "a clan cat?"

Shadow took a step back, head spinning with thoughts. "Maybe, I- I don't know... This is all just so confusing, I'm going to my nest, it's almost dark anyway."

Spark nodded sympathetically, watching her litter-mate pad to the apprentice den.

Shadow fell into a troubled sleep, filled with dreams of silver eyes and strange cats.

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Brilliant silver eyes bored into her, piercing her soul, uncovering her darkest secrets. The tom moved forward slowly, each step making a dull, pounding noise.

Shadow opened her maw in a noiseless shriek of terror. She tried to flee, but her paws had become entangled in vines and thorns.

She scanned her surroundings desperately, searching for an escape. She saw nothing but shadows and trees everywhere, blocking out the sky.

The cat moved closer still, leaving a trail of smoke and mist. He suddenly pounced forward, clawed unsheathed, fangs glistening with blood.

Shadow's eyes flew open, she looked around with a wide, terrified stare for any intruding cats. She realized it had just been a nightmare and started licking her damp fur, trembling.

She took a few moments to calm herself and looked through the entrance of the apprentice den, seeing the moon had already climbed high into the night sky.

The apprentice tried to fall asleep again but her mind was buzzing with confusing thoughts about her nightmare and the silver-eyed tom.

Shadow stood up and walked towards the entrance of the den, careful not to disturb the sleeping apprentices. She glanced around before stepping outside, hiding in the shadows next to the den.

She quietly snuck to the dirt-place, cautious to stay out of Thorn's view, who was in charge of keeping watch that night. No one was allowed to go out of camp at night without permission from Sky. The punishment would be harsh, no one was allowed to disobey Sky's rules.

Shadow squirmed her way through a small gap in the thorn barrier, wincing as the sharp points hooked themselves into her long fur. She finally got to the other side and looked back to make sure no one had followed her.

The dark-furred apprentice then padded off into the forest.

"I needed this fresh air," Shadow muttered quietly, "Maybe this will help clear my head."

Her paws led her to the training hollow, well lit despite this late time due to the bright moon. She settled herself at the edge of the clearing and looked up towards the sky. The moon was visible in the gap of trees the clearing created.

Shadow stared up at the beautiful, orb of silver in the dark sky. The moon reflected in her eyes, filling her with a tingling feeling. She breathed in the cool night air, forgetting everything that had happened that day.

Snap

A snapping twig tore her from her peaceful trance, she flicked her eyes back and forth, trying to discover the source of the sound.

Her eyes snagged on two identical orange eyes. Only one cat in BloodClan had those eyes. Blaze blinked slowly at her before lifting his eyes to the sky, staring at the moon like she had been only heartbeats earlier.

They watched the moon together in silence, on opposite sides of the

clearing. Not a sound was uttered yet a thousand words were spoken.

Sorry for the short chapter! I had writer's block but I felt like I had to get *something* out. At least you guys got a nice quote at the end, right? Don't forget to vote and comment, you guys make my day!! <3

(Word count: 855)

Chapter 9

[image] [image]

Shadow padded over to her sister, who was sitting next to Diamond. They were talking in hushed tones, throwing glances around them to make sure no one was listening to their conversation. They both stopped talking when Shadow came closer, looking at her impatiently.

"Hey Spark, I was wondering if you wanted to go hunting later?" She asked, acknowledging them both with a nod.

Spark looked slightly annoyed at the question, "I have training with Talon later today, maybe another time?"

Both cats looked eager to resume their conversation and be left alone so Shadow nodded glumly and padded away, hurt by Spark's rejection.

She pricked her ears when she saw Blaze sharing prey with Shimmer and Flint. They hadn't talked since *that* night.

"Hi!" She meowed brightly, her hurt forgotten.
"What?" Flint sneered, glaring at her.

Shadow blinked in surprise, then turned to Blaze, expecting him to look at her. Instead, he was ignoring her, chatting to Shimmer about battle training.

"Want to go hunting sometime today Blaze?" She questioned hesitantly.

Blaze turned his gaze to her, his usually burning orange eyes were now cold and reserved.

"No."

"Why not?!" Shadow breathed, confused at his behavior.

"Just leave," He growled, an unreadable expression dancing in his eyes, "No one wants you around anyways."

Shadow huffed angrily and walked away, hurt and then hot anger flowing through her. How dare he talk to her like that! After everything, he'd said and done before?

She pushed her way through the camp tunnel and started sprinting through the forest, tears blurring her vision.

Leaves crunched under her paws and twigs snapped as the apprentice raced by blindly, all her bottled up emotions getting fueled into taking long strides across the forest floor.

Shadow eventually came to a halt in a grove of trees, panting heavily. She let out a yowl, slashing her claws across an oak tree. All her pent-up emotions came tumbling out as she raked her claws across the tree over and over again, letting out growls of anger.

She froze when a familiar odor hit her scent glands. She quickly composed herself as a hunting patrol led by Ivy padded into the grove of oak trees.

Ivy cast a strange look at the claw marks on the tree but quickly moved her gaze to her apprentice.

"Sky is calling a clan gathering at sun-high so be back in camp before then, go hunt some prey if you're out here anyway." Her mentor meowed and left with her patrol.

Shadow heaved a sigh and cast a look at the sky, the sun was only a quarter of the way up so she'd still have plenty of time to hunt a decent amount of prey.

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"All cats old enough to shed blood gather beneath the Big Stone!" Sky's order rang through the camp, drawing cats to sit in the clearing, staring up at their leader expectantly.

"As every-cat knows, three apprentices became warriors of BloodClan not too long ago. They each defeated a prisoner to
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become a warrior. One cat escaped, our assassins are still busy tracking him down but we're running low on prisoners. And what does that mean?"

Sky questioned, a strange light gleaming in her bright blue eyes.

"Prisoner Hunt!!" The clan roared as one, excitement evident in their bristling pelts, unsheathed claws, and wide eyes.

Shadow had heard of prisoner hunts, savage hunts to capture more prisoners for the prisoner den. All the stories she'd heard before were gory and brutal. She gave an involuntary shudder at the thought.

"There will be three groups, one led by me, one led by Venom, and one group led by Nightshade. There will be one assassin per group, Blizzard will be in control when we're gone. Will the other two group leaders come stand next to the Big Stone." Sky ordered.

Venom and Nightshade dispatched themselves from the gathered cats and padded over to the Big Stone.

"We'll each take turns choosing a cat to join our group, five cats per group. Slash, join me."

The sleek brown she-cat silently went to stand near the Big Stone, her paw with six claws barely hindering her.

Venom swept his eyes across the gathered cats, looking for the strongest cats.
"Panther, you will be in my group."

A massive pitch black tom stepped forward, his muscular back littered with scars. Nightshade was next, her intelligent stare scanning the gathered cats.

"Ivy, join me."
Ivy stood up from where she sat close to Shadow.

"Oh, and take your apprentice too. This experience will be good for her."

Shadow's eyes widened in shock, cats began muttering amongst themselves. Apprentices were rarely chosen for Prisoner Hunts.

She forced herself to stand up and pad after her mentor, pelt bristling self consciously from all the states she was getting.

Shadow caught Spark's gaze, it was filled with worry and a bit of anger. She hoped the anger wasn't directed at her, but at Nightshade for choosing her. Spark had always been a bit paranoid of losing Shadow.

Shadow kept her head bent low as the rest of the cats were chosen, Frost, Flame, and Quartz joined the group. Apparently she didn't count as a full cat and they now had six cats in their patrol.

"We leave at the crack of dawn tomorrow! Make sure every cat that's going gets enough prey and sleep." Sky announced before jumping down from the Big Stone to join her group.

"We'll discuss our plan in the morning, every cat go get some prey and rest, you'll need it." Nightshade ordered calmly, apparently not intimidated to order an assassin what to do.

Frost let out a low hiss but padded to the fresh-kill pile to grab a dove.

Ivy turned towards her apprentice,
"Do what Nightshade told you, no going out of camp for the rest of the day."

Shadow nodded and went to get some prey herself when she heard Ivy saying to Nightshade; "Goodbye sister, I'll see you in the morning."

Shadow was surprised, Nightshade and Ivy were sisters? Family didn't really have a meaning in BloodClan, you might be friendly with your littermates when you're apprentices because you train together but after you became a warrior those bonds quickly vanish.

Shadow didn't even know who her father was, she and Spark always made sure to steer clear of Aster to avoid tension and awkwardness.

She shrugged it off, family wasn't important anyways. The apprentice fished a small squirrel out of the fresh-kill pile and ate it before lying down in a patch of shade to rest.

Hope you enjoyed this chapter! The next chapter should be interesting ಠ□ಠ
Does anyone have any idea what to name the Big Stone? It's such a plain name.
Questions:
1. What are your theories on Spark?
2. Do you like Blaze?
3. What do you like and dislike about this book? (Please be honest! This improves my writing!)

[Word count: 1165]

Chapter 10

[image] [image]

A sharp jab tore Shadow from her sleep, she blearily opened her eyes to a crack to see Ivy standing over her. She shot up suddenly, remembering what would happen today.

Unfortunately, Ivy had been standing with her head directly over Shadow's nest. The apprentice cannoned into her mentor's muzzle, resulting in a loud hiss and a heavy wack on the head.

"Sorry!" Shadow squeaked, embarrassed.

Ivy just shook her head disdainfully and walked out of the apprentice den. Shadow quickly smoothed her pelt with a few licks and added after her.

The camp was buzzing with noise and activity. The cats going were preparing themselves, grabbing prey to eat, discussing plans and tactics. The rest of the clan were talking with them with mixed expressions of jealousy and excitement.

"Shadow!"

Nightshade had called her name, now beckoning the apprentice with her tail. Shadow padded over, curious.

"Ivy and I have been discussing our plan, first we'll go to the two-leg place to catch some kitty-pets. " Nightshade started,

"Because you're still an apprentice and haven't been in as many battles you won't be doing much of the fighting. Instead, you'll be the diversion. You'll be the innocent kitty-pet looking for directions."

Shadow wrinkled her nose at the thought of acting as a weak kitty-pet. She quickly nodded after catching a glare from her mentor.

"After you lure them away from their homes, we'll attack and take

them captive" The black she-cat instructed.

Shadow nodded, then went to eat some prey. She picked through the fresh-kill pile until she'd found two plump mice. Settling down to eat, she saw Spark and Diamond talking with their heads close together.
'What could they be talking about?' She thought.

Shadow was finishing her prey when Blaze appeared next to her. They started at each other tensely for a few heartbeats before Blaze spoke.

"Good luck I guess." He meowed sharply and padded away. Shadow scoffed at his pathetic attempt at an apology. She pushed the last bite of her mouse away, her appetite ruined.

She saw Ivy beckoning her and quickly buried the prey scraps. Spark was walking towards her, probably wanting to say goodbye before they left. Shadow pretended not to see her and walked towards her mentor.

"We're leaving, go stand by the rest of our group," Ivy commanded. The apprentice nodded and went over to where Nightshade stood with the other cats in their patrol.

Sky raised her tail and led her patrol out of camp, a loud cheer erupted from the other cats. Nightshade led them after Sky, keeping a fast, but steady pace.

As Shadow passed Spark, she saw the hurt look on her sister's face. Ignoring it, she recalled when Spark had ignored *her*.

Shadow tried her best to keep up with the rest of the patrol, her long fur kept getting caught on bushes and twigs, making it harder to move swiftly through the forest.

They tread through the forest until sun-high, crossing the border into unknown land.

Sky halted her patrol, turning around to address everyone. "This is where we split up. Your patrol leader will decide where you go next. Be back in camp in a quarter moon."

She then turned around veered sharply left, her cats following without hesitation. Nightshade led them to the right, towards the two-leg place.

They traveled all day, arriving at the edge of a two-leg place as night fell. Ivy and Flame went back into the forest to hunt, while Quartz, Frost, Nightshade, and Shadow were left to make nests.

Shadow began collecting ferns, weaving them into nests, and strengthening the sides with vines and twigs. There was no moss so they'd have to do with ferns and bracken as bedding.

No one spoke a word, the only noise that could be heard was the sound of Quartz and Shadow finishing the last two nests.

Shadow almost jumped when Ivy and Flame appeared out of nowhere, jaws heavy with prey.

"Everyone take a piece of prey and go to sleep after that, tomorrow will be a long day." Nightmare said, hooking a vole with her claws and dragging it towards her.

Ivy tossed Shadow a shrew, then took some prey for herself. After carefully burying the prey scraps as to not attracts any unwanted animals, they all settled into their nests.

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The next morning Nightshade woke everyone up before dawn. "Get up you lazy fleabags, we have some hunting to do!"

Shadow blinked blearily, stretching her stiff muscles. Sleeping in an open area without soft moss to keep her warm, she hadn't been able to get much sleep.

When everyone had woken up enough to function properly Nightshade led everyone into the two-leg place.

Shadow's fur bristled as strange, unfamiliar scents and noises crashed into her. The weird grey surface hurt her paws as she walked across it. Soon they came to a long strip of black. It was about a tree length wide and humongous objects whizzed by on
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them, leaving a sour stench.

"This is a Thunderpath, two-legs build them for monsters, the big objects that use them to get from one place to another. We'll have to cross it." Ivy explained to her wide-eyed apprentice.

Nightshade crouched down low and crept closer to the foul path, gesturing they to follow her.

"On my signal, run across as fast as you can. Whatever you do, don't stop or slow down!" She hissed, her ears pressed flat to her head as more monsters thundered by.

They crouched there, hunched down, eyes narrowed, for multiple heartbeats. Nightshade was waiting for a long enough gap between monsters to appear, giving them a chance to dash to the other side.

"Now!" She yowled as a silence fell across the path. They exploded forward, paws flying as they raced across the toxic-smelling path as fast as they could. Shadow's heartbeat was erratic, her claws were unsheathed as she forced her legs to move faster.

The vibrations in the hot, sticky, black surface told them another monster was approaching. They flung themselves off the Thunderpath and onto the other side as a red monster sped by, filling the air with a sour stench.

Shadow rubbed her pelt onto the dying grass, trying to get the disgusting odor off of her pelt. Her paws were scraped and sore from pelting across the Thunderpath, the prickly grass didn't make it any better.

After they had all caught their breath, they started walking again. Shadow's ears hurt from all the loud noises, even Sliver's howls were better than this.

She suddenly felt a wave of homesickness and longed for the forest again. She pictured soft forest floors and sunlight filtering through green branches.

They stopped in front of a row of two-leg dens. They all had a small section of grass in front of them, surrounded by a thin wall of wood.

"Which one are we taking first?" Flame asked. Something triggered inside of Shadow at those words, her legs buckled underneath her as darkness clouded her vision.

"Which one should I take?" A voice meowed in a hushed tone.

"How about the gray one?" A different voice whispered back. Silence fell after those words. Then Shadow heard pawsteps come closer. A cat's head bent down, picking up a warm body next to her. She mewed indignantly as cold air hit her side.

"Someone's coming!" The urgent warning caused the cat to drop the bundle of fur and move away quickly.

A sharp claw racked Shadow across the nose, sweeping her back into reality. Ivy was standing over her, an annoyed expression on her face.

"Next time you decide to take a nap, don't do it in the middle of dangerous territory!" Her mentor snapped, jabbing her cruelly with a paw before padding away.

Shadow pulled herself to her paws, and let out a shuddering breath. *'What just happened?'*

Hope you guys enjoyed this chapter! Let me know your thoughts in the comments! What do you think that flashback was about? Don't forget to vote! <33
(Word count: 1355)

Updated Allegiances

[image]

Updated allegiances!

Leader:

Sky: Pretty gray and blue she-cat with blue eyes

Deputy:

Blizzard: White tom with black flecks and yellow eyes

Assassins:

Mask: White tom with black mask pattern on his head

Frost: Pure white small she-cat

Slash: Sleek brown she-cat with 6 claws on her right forepaw

Blade: Brown tabby tom

Raven: Black she-cat with strangely slanted, silver eyes

Warriors:

Venom: Red and black tom

Ivy: Calico she-cat with green eyes
Apprentice: Shadow

Panther: Dark brown tabby tom with many scars

Nightshade: Pure black she-cat with green eyes

Heron: Large dark brown tom

Flame: Ginger tom with amber eyes

Minty: Small dark gray she-cat with pale green eyes

Talon: Black tom with hazel eyes
Apprentice: Spark

Bristle: Skinny russet she-cat with blue eyes

Bolt: Lean silver and white tom

Quartz: Gray and black tabby tom
Apprentice: Blaze

Smoke: Dusky gray she-cat
Apprentice: Shimmer

Rapids: Dark gray and white spotted tom

Fox: Battle-scarred dark ginger tom
Apprentice: Fang

Thorn: Dark brown tabby she-cat with light blue eyes

Aster: Black and the white tabby she-cat

Pixie: Small white she-cat with yellow eyes

Rain: Gray tom with deep blue eyes

Ivory: Pale creamy white she-cat

Apprentices:

Blaze: Yellow and gray tom with orange eyes

Shimmer: Ginger and white she-cat

Fang: White tom with gray patches

Shadow: Black and gray shaggy she-cat with stormy blue eyes

Spark: Small white cat with ginger patches and yellow eyes

Queens:

Diamond: White and cream she-cat with amber eyes

Snowy: White she-cat with a shredded ear (Nursing Heron's kit Sliver)

Jade: Silver she-cat with jade green eyes (Expecting Fox's kits)

Kits:

Sliver: White tom with gray stripes

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Cats outside BloodClan :

Caspian: Massive black tom

Fog: Gray tom with murky green eyes.

Unknown: Large brown tom with silver eyes.
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Chapter 11

[image]

"Quiet!" Nightshade hissed as Flame accidentally bumped into a tall silver tree trunk that smelled like carrion. He cast her a dirty look but moved away from the shiny thing.

Shadow narrowed her eyes in focus as they approached the unsuspecting, innocent, kitty-pet. The fat, snow-white tom was sprawled out in the sun, his long fur wafting gently in the breeze. He lazily began grooming one of his paws, his amber eyes half-closed.

Ivy prodded her apprentice forward, then retracted back into the shelter of a big bush. Shadow took a deep breath and padded forward, forcing a confused look onto her face. She had rubbed against a two-leg den earlier, weaving their putrid scent into her tangled fur.

The white tom's nose twitched as he smelled her coming. He gave her a friendly blink and hauled himself to his feet.
"'Ello youngster, watcha doin? I'da reckon' you're lost!"
Shadow was surprised at his strange accent but decided to ignore it.
"I-I was w-wondering if you'd t-tell me where the-the small forest is?" She stammered dumbly, referring to the small forest of trees and grass in the middle of the two-leg place.

"'Acourse! S'not far, don'tcha worry your precious soul darlin', it ain't far, just 'round the bend and then-" At that moment Flame and Frost pounced on top of him, pinning him into the ground. Ivy and Quartz followed quickly after, knocking the tom unconscious.

Nightshade padded up to them, giving them approving looks. *Typical Sky move,* Shadow thought, *Letting other cats do the dirty work.*

Quartz and Frost dragged the unconscious kittypet to their temporary camp where they would stuff him into a prison they had

built that morning from thorns and branches. Frost stayed behind to guard him, being an assassin, she could easily stop him from escaping or fend off any of his kittypet friends stupid enough to try and free him.

"Well done," Ivy growled in a low voice, appearing suddenly behind Shadow. The apprentice nodded, flustered at her mentor's sudden appearance.

"Alright everybody, gather around!" Nightshade called out, gesturing for the remaining cats to come closer. Shadow tried not to let her fur stand up as Quartz stood uncomfortably close, breathing hot, foul air onto her.

"The next action plan is simple, I saw a whole nest of kitty-pets earlier, we'll pretend we're just some lost hungry cats and hopefully they'll take us in. When they're all asleep, we'll attack. There's four of them and six of us, that should be an easy fight, especially since they have little to no fighting experience." Nightshade explained briefly, looking around to make sure everyone understood.

Shadow nodded but shuddered at the thought of having to share a den with those disgusting kittypets.

They started walking, the setting sun turning their fur shades of orange and yellow. Shadow was glad when the sun finally disappeared behind the huge two-leg dens, the sun had turned the rough, dark gray surface under their paws scorching hot.

The sky had gone almost completely dark when Nightshade stiffened, her ears twitched and her nostrils flared. Ivy too had stooped in her tracks, a low, warning growl rumbling deep in her chest.

“Dog!” She finally yowled as the scratching of large, blunt claws on the hard gray surface also became audible to the rest of their patrol. Everyone scattered into different directions, leaving a very bewildered and alarmed Shadow behind.

A medium-sized white dog came tearing around the corner, barking ferociously, slobber flying from her bared, glinting fangs. The

terrified apprentice shot from her spot, fur on end, eyes wide.

She bolted away from the dog, frantically looking for an escape. A thorny bush caught her eyes, just a tree-length away. Shadow dove under the bush, ignoring the sharp thorns dragging at her pelt. Small pricks of blood started welling up on her muzzle, she blinked them away, panicking as the dog started pawing at the bush.

Shadow backed up as far as she could, until a wooden wall blocked her. The dog was getting excited, growling and snuffling as it got closer to its prey. But before the snarling dog could reach the terrified apprentice, a blur shot in front of the dog, Ivy was speeding in the opposite direction now, distracting the dog and leading it away from Shadow.

Quartz's large head appeared in a gap between the branches, "Don't just stand there you stupid apprentice, move!"

Shadow snapped out of her shock and wriggled her way out from under the bush, leaving more clumps of her fur on the sharp thorns. She ran after Quartz, who was already bolting for where Nightshade and Flame stood on top of one of the many wooden walls.

Quartz leaped up, his strong shoulders easily hanging onto the edge of the wall, and pulled himself up. Shadow took a deep breath and propelled herself into the air and onto the wooden wall. She sunk her claws into the wood and tried pulling herself up with the same ease as Quartz had.

She struggled as her claws began to slip but thankfully, Nightshade dipped her head down and hauled her onto the wall roughly. A few heartbeats later, Ivy came padding around the corner and joined them.

“I lost it easily enough, stupid thing.” She meowed, still slightly out of breath. Nightshade agreed, then led them down to the ground. After making sure they were traveling in the right direction, they continued walking at a steady pace.

When Nightshade finally halted them, Shadow was so tired she thought her paws might fall off. “Alright, remember, we’re just

some dumb, cute, innocent kittypets that went exploring and got lost.”

Shadow was honestly sick and tired of Nightshade’s orders and was desperate for a warm den and some food. She padded after the others, head bent low and tail dragging on the floor. Nightshade led them to an old-looking den, it was so dark right now that Shadow could barely make out the features.

“Hello?” A husky voice called out. A tom stepped out of the den, his dark amber eyes looking right past all the others and boring straight into Shadows. Starlight reflected off of his eyes as Shadow’s heartbeat pounded in her chest.

Finally another chapter!! Sorry it's so short but I promise the next one will be longer! I have so many ideas for new characters so keep an eye out for those (:
Some ✧ questions✧
1. What do you think of the cats on the patrol so far?
2. What would you like to happen in the next chapter? (It can be as crazy as you like!)
3. Forbidden romance, yay or nay?

Love you all so, so much and don't forget to vote and comment <3

Chapter 12

[image]

Nightshade stepped forward, blocking Shadow's view. The apprentice quickly lowered her gaze to her paws and tried to look as tired and helpless as she could.

"Hello," Nightshade called out, "We mean no harm, just a safe place to spend the night. We got lost when we went exploring."

The tom narrowed his dark eyes in suspicion as three cats joined him.

"Who are you?" One of them asked, a pale tortoiseshell with golden eyes. She had abnormally long claws, Shadow noticed. Before they had approached the den, Nightshade had given them all new names that would help sell their act of innocent kitty-pets.

Shadow had become Cloud, Ivy was Leaf, Nightshade was now Midnight, Quartz was Fluffy (much to his dismay), and Flame had been renamed Rusty.

Nightshade quickly introduced everyone and then proceeded to look around with wide eyes.

"Wow, your den is so big!" She meowed with fake excitement. Flame let out a snicker but was quickly silenced by a merciless jab in the side from Quartz. A white and light gray she-cat with feathery fur and sparkling light green eyes broke her silence and piped up,

"Well, don't just stand there in the dark, come inside! And stop looking like you're about to claw their pelts off Jupiter" She added with a playful glare directed to the tom with amber eyes who had first spoken to them.

The tom grudgingly nodded and padded inside the small wooden den, flicking his tail as a signal for all of them to follow. Nightshade

led them inside, and Shadow followed eagerly, hoping to finally rest her sore paws.

Once they had all settled, the tom with amber eyes spoke. "Welcome to our den. You can call me Jupiter, here next to me is North." He said, nodding to the pale tortoiseshell beside him. "Over by the wall are Fae and Otter."

The white and gray she-cat who had invited them in earlier greeted them with a meow, and the brown tom with a tabby pattern and a white underbelly flicked his tail at them in a friendly gesture.

"Thank you for letting us stay here," Ivy said, blinking at the cats, "we'll be out of your fur by tomorrow morning, we promise!"

"Oh, no need!" Fae said airily, "Guests are always welcome here. Otter, go get them some good food, they must be starving." Otter slipped out of the den, barely making any sound, Shadow noticed.

Nightshade led them to a corner of the den, where a pile of leaves and moss lay, she looked surprised that kitty-pets would have moss, as they would have had to go out into the forest to get this amount.

They settled down, relieving their tired paws. Flame dozed off after a while, but Shadow was too curious about the kitty-pets to even think about sleep. Jupiter was curled up on the opposite side of the den, his face towards the wall.

Fae was carefully grooming her long fur but kept an eye on the strange cats in her den. After what seemed like forever to Shadow, Otter finally returned, fresh-kill clamped between his strong jaws.

Fresh-kill?

Shadow thought, confused about how kitty-pets could have possibly gotten four mice, a squirrel, and two birds. It would have been a good catch for trained, BloodClan cats, but for soft, weak, kitty-pets? Impossible!

Shadow saw her mentor's eyes narrow slightly, also having noticed the big pile Otter had accumulated in such a short time. Jupiter rose from where he lay, and let out a massive jawn, his fangs

gleaming in the moonlight filtering in through the roof.

"Snapper and Willow helped me catch all this food, so I managed to get back faster!" Otter chirped, before proceeding to mutter under his breath about how he had done most of the work and Willow had just sat on her fat tail the whole time.

"Thank you, Otter! Feel free to take some food." Fae directed the last line to Nightshade and the rest of the group, giving them a friendly nod. Ivy walked forward meekly, clearly hating having to act this way. She slowly lowered her head and picked up a gray squirrel. She padded back to Shadow and dropped the prey in front of her.
"Let's share."

Shadow nodded, and settled down to eat, while the rest of the cats also took their pick of fresh-kill and began to satisfy their hungry stomachs. The apprentice bit back a snicker as she saw how Quartz gave Flame a forced, fake purr of gratitude as the ginger tom pushed the rest of the bird to him, glaring in the process.

"So where did your owners go?" Nightshade inquired, "Surely they will be back soon, us kittypets could never survive without one!" She let out a mirthful meow that almost sounded genuine to Shadow.

North and Jupiter exchanged uneasy glances while Fae and Otter shifted nervously.

"We aren't kittypets," North began, "We used to be part of a large group of cats, but most of them died of a mysterious sickness. We were one of the only cats to survive, and we decided to take refuge in this abandoned den, it's much safer among two-legs than in the forest."

Shadow almost let out a gasp of surprise, what would they do now?! If these cats used to live in the forest they must be strong, and they could never capture them without severe losses. Ivy must have come to the same conclusion because she looked at Nightshade and they shared a silent conversation with their eyes.

"To tell the truth, we haven't been completely honest about who we are either," Nightshade ventured, ignoring the sharp looks the rest of her group gave her. "We too, come from a large group of cats, called BloodClan. We are in need of strong cats for our clan, as we don't have many kits at the moment." Nightshade looked each of the "kittypets" in the eyes before continuing carefully.

"You can hunt well, and if you lived in the forest, you must know how to fight. We would like to invite you to join BloodClan as warriors." The black she-cat finished. Shadow's mind was reeling, and it felt like she couldn't breathe. Every time she thought she had figured out how BloodClan worked, they kept surprising her. What was even real at this point?

Jupiter rose to his paws slowly and didn't move for several heartbeats, the only sign of motion was the end of his tail twitching. When he finally spoke, Shadow jumped even though she was expecting it and she tried to relax her tense muscles.

"Thank you for your offer, we will discuss it amongst ourselves and let you know in the morning." The tom answered, nodding his head to Nightshade before turning back to his friends.

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Despite her sore limbs, Shadow could barely sleep that night. Despite the soft moss and peaceful night, the soft whispers of Jupiter and the other cats kept her awake. Her mind was racing at all the possible scenarios that could come from this.

Shadow must have fallen asleep at some point because suddenly Flame was prodding her with a not-so-gentle paw. She dragged herself upright and blinked her sleepy eyes.

"Nightshade was yowling at me to get everyone up so you better get your tail out of our nest before she scratched my whiskers off." Flame muttered, rolling his eyes at Shadow's futile attempts to smooth her unruly coat down.

When everyone was up and gathered around Nightshade, the forest cats padded over to them.
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"We have carefully evaluated your offer and come to a decision," Fae stated, calmly sitting down and wrapping her tail around her paws neatly.

Sorry for making you guys wait literally 8 months for another chapter, I was in a writing slump, but I'm back to writing now! What do you think of the new characters? What do you think they will do? Will they join Blood clan or refuse, which could end in a battle....

Anyways, see you guys in the next chapter, and thank you so so much for reading! <33

(Word Count: 1301)

Chapter 13

[image]

"We will join your clan," Fae said eventually. The rest of her friends stood behind her, North looked slightly hesitant and distrustful, Otter was almost vibrating with excitement, and Jupiter just stared out into the world with those unreadable, deep, amber eyes.

Nightshade bowed her head towards them, carefully masking any emotion. "I'm sure our leader Sky will welcome you into our clan."

The forest cats looked startled, unease creeping into their eyes.

"Sky?" Jupiter spoke, "Not Skystar? Was she rejected by StarClan?" Shadow blinked in confusion. *StarClan?* She looked to her mentor for guidance.

"The forest cats believe in some kind of after-life. They think their leaders get "blessed" by these starry, dead, cats. Sounds like mouse-fluff to me, sometimes I wonder if some of the forest cats are a bit befuddled in the head." Ivy whispered in her apprentice's ear.

"We don't... communicate with StarClan," Nightshade said carefully, not wanting to scare off the possibility of new, strong warriors for her clan. The forest cats exchanged a dubious glance but didn't question it further. The cats quickly finished off any leftover scraps from the previous night before gathering by the entrance of the two-leg den.

Shadow was buzzing with excitement, looking forward to returning to camp. It was the only place she had ever known before this mission and despite the cruel and brutal standards within the clan, it was her home. She even missed Sliver's obnoxious mews in the middle of the night.

They set off to where Frost was still guarding the captured kittypet. Nightshade had sent Flame to sprint ahead and inform the assassin about what had happened. They agreed not to tell the forest cats

about the prisoner hunt yet, so as to not frighten them.

Even with BloodClan's limited medical knowledge, every cat knew that catmint would help sedate a cat or relieve pain. To keep the kittypet mild and cooperative, they would give him a large amount of the herb.

Fortunately that the forest cats didn't question Nightshade's explanation of Frost and the kittypet (now named Snowy) feeling ill and having to stay behind.

Jupiter, Otter, and Shadow were sent out to collect moss and ferns for the nests. Otter followed Shadow, chattering nonstop, while Jupiter disappeared into the forest quietly by himself.

Shadow was growing fond of the ever-cheerful Otter, who was constantly cracking jokes or boasting about his many accomplishments. Together they swiftly collected soft bedding and headed back to where they would spend the night.

When they arrived at the temporary camp, Fae padded up to them and started to help them weave nests for all the cats. Not long after, North, Quartz, and Frost came back with prey.

Jupiter picked up a large dove and came up to where Shadow and Otter were sitting.

"Let's share." His voice came out muffled by the feathers. They quickly gathered around the bird and started filling their empty stomachs. Shadow was too busy removing the feathers from one of the dove's wings to see Otter shove some of the soft dove down up Jupiter's nose.

He jerked his head back, sneezing violently. When he could breathe normally, he turned and glared at Otter.

"Really?! Was it really necessary to do that?" He growled.

"Necessary, no. Hilarious? Yes." Otter smirked, before chomping down on the dove again. Jupiter rolled his eyes when he caught Fae looking on with an amused expression. He shook his head, glaring at Otter again.

Shadow was surprised at how the forest cats interacted with each other. If Otter had done that to a cat in BloodClan, he would have gotten his pelt clawed off. She was worried about how they would cope in their new clan for a second but shrugged it off. Everyone with half a brain could see that BloodClan was a better clan than whatever they used to be part of.

Jupiter and Otter continued hurling half-hearted insults at each other until North stalked up to them and hit Otter on the head with a heavy paw.

"Stop acting like kits you two." She muttered to them. Even though she was putting up a tough face, Shadow caught a glimmer of fondness in her eyes.

"Hey!" Otter protested, shoving her away, "Brighten up sis, scowling like that doesn't look attractive, and trust me, I would know." He smirked, smoothing down his fur.

Shadow blinked in surprise, she never would have guessed that Otter and North were littermates, they were polar opposites. Otter was always joking around, chattering non-stop, and never took anything seriously. North on the other paw, was serious, the leader of the group despite her young age, and always thought before she spoke.

North looked like she was on the verge of delivering Otter another hit on the head, but Fae walked up just in time to stop it. She seemed to be the peacekeeper of the group, her sweet words always calming down everyone.

Shadow cast a glance around the circle of cats and saw that everyone was done eating. As she was an apprentice, she automatically started collecting the scraps of prey to bury. Jupiter rose to his paws and started helping her. They collected all the scraps in their jaws and padded away from the clearing.

Shadow watched as Jupiter started digging a hole, his large paws digging into the soft earth. Even though he was larger than her, he still had a bit of roundness in his ears and his fur looked softer than the other forest cats. Shadow realized he must be close to the same

age as her.

He glanced up, "What's it like in your clan?" he asked.

Shadow blinked, stopping herself from blurting out the truth.

"It's amazing. We're really strong, and everyone works together in a smart way. There is almost always enough food, even for the kits!" She gushed, trying to convince herself as well as Jupiter.

He narrowed his amber eyes in confusion, "Even for the kits?" He muttered under his breath. He shook it off and asked about Shadow's family instead.

"I have a sister, Spark," Shadow replied, grateful for the change in subject, "We train together sometimes."

"What about your parents?" He asked

"My mother is a cat named Aster, but we stopped talking after I was apprenticed. And I don't have a father." She scrunched her nose, "That I know of at least, he must be someone in BloodClan but toms are never involved in raising kits. Most of us will never know who Sky paired our mothers with."

Shadow had briefly speculated about who her father could have been when she was a kit but came to the conclusion that it didn't matter, family was of no importance. That was one of the lessons Aster had ingrained into her since she was only a moon old.

Jupiter looked disturbed, but thankfully he didn't question BloodClan's methods.

"I never knew my father either. He was killed by a badger when my mother was a queen. Mousetail never recovered from her mate dying right before she gave birth to me. She got really distant after that and I was mostly raised by the other queens." He recalled, giving Shadow a small, sad smile.

"Mousefur? I've never heard a name like that before. I- " She searched for the right words, "I'm sorry you didn't know your parents that well." It felt weird saying that, as it was the BloodClan

norm, but she felt like she had to say *something*.

"In the clans, we are given a name at birth, like Snow or Bramble, followed by kit. I used to be Smokekit, after my pelt. When you become an apprentice, you're a 'paw', so I was Smokepaw. When you become a warrior, you get a unique suffix. I never got mine, as soon as we arrived at the two-leg den, we gave ourselves new names. It's better to leave the past behind." Jupiter murmured, a pained look in his amber eyes.

Shadow nodded, intrigued by how different their worlds were. She shoved her half of the prey scraps into the hole Jupiter had finished and helped him scrape the dirt back into it. They worked together quickly and then turned their paws back to the nests.

When Shadow fell asleep that night, there was only one thing on her mind...

Another chapter!! Who is your favorite forest cat so far? Otters has my whole heart, he's so precious! Hope you guys enjoyed, and please comment your feedback, it helps me so much!!

Love you guys <33

[Word Count: 1396]

Chapter 14

[image]

Shadow stretched her stiff limbs, the sun had barely risen, but Nightshade seemed anxious to leave early. The apprentice looked forward to telling Spark about all the exciting things she'd seen on the mission. Even though they had been gone for only a quarter moon, it seemed like they had spent an entire season away.

She was about to go over to Jupiter, wanting to tell him about a funny dream she'd had when she saw Nightshade glaring at Flame. The tom took longer than the others to get on his paws, and she decided against it.

When they were all ready to leave, Nightshade led the way with a brisk pace. Ignoring the rumbling in her stomach, Shadow tried to mimic her long strides, cursing softly whenever her long fur got tangled in brambles. The new cats seemed wary but more comfortable among their group than they did last night. She hoped they would fit into the clan without too much trouble. No one could ever predict how Sky would react to anything.

With only one kit in the nursery, the BloodClan leader was bound to accept them, Shadow reasoned. It wouldn't be easy for them at first, of course, they would need to prove themselves to the other warriors before being treated like equals. The new cats looked strong though, she thought, as she watched Jupiter's back muscles ripple as he jumped over a fallen tree trunk.

Shadow was so absorbed in her thoughts she barely noticed their group crossing into BloodClan territory. She noticed a subtle change in her clanmates too, Flame and Quartz had their tails raised, and even her usually stern mentor looked a bit more relaxed now that she felt safe in her homelands. North, Fae, Otter, and Jupiter were gazing around curiously, taking in the different kinds of prey that scurried through the trees and on the ground.

Otter suddenly dashed to the right with no warning. Nightshade's

fur immediately stood on end and she tensed, ready to sprint after the escaped forest cat. Ivy quickly put a warning tail on her shoulder, glancing at the other cats. North was glaring at the black she-cat, taking a step in front of her brother.

A few tense moments later, Otter appeared from a pile of dead leaves, a fat mouse between his jaws. He purred happily, his tail held high proudly. He dropped it in front of Nightshade.

"Sorry if I startled you, but when I saw this mouse I couldn't resist! It's a thank-you gift for being so generous and letting us into your clan." He explained, as the she-cat's fur slowly laid back down on her shoulders.

"Right, thank you very much, Otter. You will make a good addition to the hunting patrols." She said, giving him an approving nod.

The tom padded back to his friends, ignoring North's disapproving gaze. Fae put her tail around his shoulder affectionately, and Shadow narrowed her eyes at the strange gesture.

She briefly wondered what it would feel like to be loved like that, but the ingrained sense of duty to her clan and rules chased the thought away. Fight, survive, and make your clan proud. No distractions. This was the way of life.

The closer the group got to the BloodClan camp, the more anxious Shadow felt herself getting. She could already imagine the mixed reactions of her clanmates to the forest cats. She guiltily distracted herself by thinking of Spark.

A bit of joy sparked in her chest as she looked forward to the conversations they would have about this trip. They were bound to stretch far into the night until they fell asleep with their tails tightly intertwined.

No distractions!

Shadow frowned at her whimsical thoughts, reminding herself of what she owed to her clan.

Make them proud, She reminded herself, *maybe then I'll deserve to feel*

loved.

"Are you ready?" Shadow quietly murmured to Fae, who was walking beside her. The pretty she-cat looked nervous, her green eyes wide.

"I think so. It's just been so long since I've been in a big group of cats. I'm not sure how we'll adjust." She confessed.

"I'm sure you'll be fine! BloodClan is probably the best place a cat could be." Shadow assured Fae, feeling a twinge of guilt at how fake she sounded.

Nightshade stopped them a few treelengths away from the camp, turning to address the group.

"Ivy, Flame, and Shadow will stay with the new cats when we get to the camp, I will go talk to Sky to inform her, and Quartz and Frost will, uh, take care of Snowy."

They all turned to look at the plump, white tom, who was blinking happily at a mushroom. The catmint was clearly working.

They started walking again, a slight air of nervousness surrounding all of them. Shadow felt Fae take a deep breath as the camp came into sight.

Panther was guarding it, his huge body blocking the entrance. His ears perked up as he saw Nightshade approaching, but they quickly flattened against his skull. He growled deep in his throat, his fur, littered with scars, stood on end. He glared at the unguarded, undrugged, forest cats.

"It's alright, Panther, they're with us. I want them to join our clan. Stay at the entrance while I discuss this with Sky." Nightshade meowed, responding to his glare with an icy, but steady gaze.

Ivy led the forest cats through the tunnel and walked to a space to the left of the Big Stone. Shadow and Flame followed them to sit on either side of the group, protecting, rather than guarding the cats.

While waiting for Nightshade to emerge from Sky's den, Shadow

spotted Talon sitting by the fresh-kill pile. It was strange he was not with his apprentice, and she scanned the camp for her sister.

The black and gray apprentice turned to her mentor, "Can I quickly go find Spark? It will only take a few moments."

Ivy looked annoyed but grunted her approval.

Shadow padded over to Talon, who was still pawing through the fresh-kill pile.

"Hello, Talon," she greeted, dipping her head respectfully, "do you know where Spark is?"

The black tom looked at her, his hazel eyes filled with confusion.

"Spark?"

"Yes! I was hoping to see her before Sky called a meeting." Shadow replied.

Talon still looked lost, "A meeting-, don't you know Spark is dead?"

5 seconds.

That's how long it takes for a heart to break.

3 words.

That's what it takes for a life to shatter.

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Apologies for not posting for months! And I'm sorry for killing Spark 😭😭
I swear I don't do it for fun lmao
Anywaysss, thoughts?
Would love to know what you guys think of this new chapter!
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